

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

BEDLINGTONSHIRE

Urban District Council,

FOR THE YEAR 1921,

BY

 W. HUDSON, 


Medical Officer of Health.

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE
Bedlingtonshire Urban District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

It can safely be said that the year 1921 with the continued ill effects of the war, the lengthy coal strike with its train of deprivations, overcrowding increasing at a greater rate than measures adopted to alleviate it have all been inimical to the health of the district.

Under all these adverse circumstances there are certain factors which point to some success having been achieved, whilst in other instances, particular diseases have shown an increase which is disappointing but not surprising.

The General Death Rate shows a decline whilst the Infantile Mortality Rate is the lowest on record. The fall in the latter has been gradual since the initiation of the Maternity and Child Welfare Work, and to this we must attribute the cause.

Deaths from Tuberculosis have reverted to the High Pre-War Rate and with the present conditions of overcrowding and increased incidence of Tuberculosis in milk, we can anticipate this unfortunate condition to remain with us until drastic measures free from all sentiment are adopted.

The Housing Problem will assist in the solution of this difficulty, but the Ministry must press forward the permanent isolation of sufferers, particularly advanced cases from the healthy members of the community.

The gradual spread of infection by advanced cases to other members of the household is so evident to the Medical Practitioner, that, unless exposure to infection is reduced to a minimum, only a limited degree of success can be expected from the Housing Scheme.

Area (Acres), 9025·784, including water.

Population, 26,880.

No. of Inhabited Houses, 5735, including 5 temporary wood erections at Cambois.

No. of Families or Separate Occupiers, 5935 (approx.).

Ratable Value—April, 1921, £146,684. October, 1921, £93,471/17/-

Sum represented by a Penny Rate, £611/3/8. „ £289/9/3.

DEATH RATE.

During the year 344 deaths, 186 of males and 158 of females were registered after accounting for 9 outward transfers and 38 inward transfers. This is equivalent to an Annual Death Rate of 12·79 per 1,000.

SUMMARY OF DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT, FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1921.

	Netherton Ward		Bedlington Ward		Sleekburn Ward		Cambois Ward		West Sleekburn Ward		Choppington Ward		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
January ...	2	1	4	2	3	1	1	3	3	2	1	3	14	12
February ...	1	0	2	4	7	8	1	4	6	3	6	3	23	22
March ...	1	1	0	2	8	3	0	2	1	1	3	2	22	11
April ...	3	1	4	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	4	1	14	8
May ...	0	0	7	3	3	3	2	1	0	2	3	3	15	12
June ...	1	0	2	7	2	5	0	1	1	1	0	6	6	20
July ...	0	1	5	0	7	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	14	4
August ...	0	1	3	1	4	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	10	9
September ...	0	0	4	6	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	1	13	13
October ...	0	0	2	2	3	7	3	1	2	1	3	3	13	14
November ...	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	0	3	4	9	11
December ...	1	1	4	2	6	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	17	9
	9	7	48	36	49	39	15	18	19	15	30	30	170	145

The deaths of illegitimate children under 1 year were :—Males, 6 ; Females, 2. Total, 8.

BIRTH RATE.

During the year 777 births, 398 boys and 379 girls, were registered. This includes illegitimate boys 21 and illegitimate girls 14, and this is equivalent to an Annual Birth Rate of 28.9 per 1,000. There is, then, a decline in the Birth Rate, with a marked fall in the rate of illegitimate children.

SUMMARY OF BIRTHS FOR THE YEAR ENDED THE 31ST DEC., 1921.

	Netherton Ward		Bedlington Ward		Sleekburn Ward		Cambois Ward		West Sleekburn Ward		Choppington Ward		Total	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
January ...	1	2	10	9	13	10	3	1	5	0	11	8	43	30
February ...	2	3	5	7	6	7	3	3	3	1	12	4	29	27
March ...	3	4	11	6	6	10	5	3	4	3	10	5	39	31
April ...	1	1	8	10	10	4	3	2	4	2	8	11	34	30
May ...	4	5	13	10	10	7	2	3	3	3	12	6	44	34
June ...	5	3	4	12	7	16	5	8	2	3	9	4	32	46
July ...	2	3	4	7	10	4	3	1	3	1	5	7	27	23
August ...	1	2	6	11	4	6	2	2	2	5	7	12	22	38
September ...	3	2	5	8	5	5	3	0	3	4	7	10	26	29
October ...	4	5	16	9	6	14	3	3	2	1	4	3	35	35
November ...	0	4	4	8	12	6	2	3	2	2	13	8	34	31
December ...	5	0	6	6	2	5	2	2	6	2	12	10	33	25
	31	34	93	103	91	94	36	31	37	29	110	88	398	379

Illegitimate births (included in the above table)—Boys, 21 ; Girls, 14. Total, 35.

GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF THE DEATH TABLE.

There is nothing of any particular note regarding the causes of death during the year.

Tuberculosis and Pneumonia still account for an unusual proportion, the former as already mentioned being probably due to Housing conditions, whilst in the latter, many deaths complicated Influenza. Cancer or

Malignant Disease shows an increase, a condition which is difficult to explain beyond the fact that hereditary predisposition may play some part.

7 deaths from Influenza occurred in January, February and March and were generally distributed.

26 deaths from Pneumonia occurred and principally during the period of Influenza, Lobar and Broncho Pneumonia being almost equally divided. There were 3 deaths in January, 7 in February, 9 in March, and 7 in December.

DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS PULMONARY AND OTHER FORMS.

Year.	Totals.	Pulmonary.	Other Forms.	Rate per 1000.
1916	48	36	12	2.00
1917	45	34	11	1.9
1918	41	35	6	1.77
1919	36	28	8	1.31
1920	35	16	19	1.3
1921	52	30	22	1.9

DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS, 1921.

			Males.	Females.	Total.
Pulmonary	...	...	17	13	30
Other Forms	...	...	13	9	22

Of the Pulmonary cases, 14 deaths occurred in January, February and March. Of the 22 deaths from other forms, 6 were Abdominal Tuberculosis.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

74 deaths under 1 year were registered in the district, which includes one outward transfer, making an Infantile Mortality Rate of 95 per 1,000 and being the lowest on record.

The following are the principal points of interest in this table :—

- (1) A definite decrease in the number of deaths from Prematurity, notwithstanding the fact that many mothers from the beginning of pregnancy to the termination are following their domestic duties, unduly confined to their homes and, owing to conditions in a mining area, are unable to enjoy regular and sufficiently long periods of undisturbed rest.
- (2) As in recent years owing to visitations of Influenza, 11 deaths were due to Pneumonia, all being of the Broncho Pneumonia Type and thus complicating Influenza.
- (3) Unfortunately 8 cases were registered as Convulsions which is very indefinite, gives no information and is probably in many cases the effect and not the cause of illnesses.
- (4) Owing to suitable conditions of temperature and moisture during the months of July, August and September, Infective Enteritis was very prevalent and accounted for 11 deaths under 1 year. The larger proportion of these deaths occurred in September.
- (5) As in later years deaths from Wasting Diseases in Infancy have gradually declined and is probably due to more judicious feeding and knowledge imparted to young mothers by the Health Visitors.
- (6) There were no deaths from Syphilis or Diseases of Parturition which indicates the comparative freedom of the district from Venereal Diseases and also the efficiency of the Maternity Work which is conducted by the various Nursing Associations in the district.

ALLOCATION OF ZYMOTIC DEATHS TO SUB-DISTRICTS.

	Netherton	Bedlington	W. Sleekburn	Sleekburn	Choppington	Cambois	Total
Enteric Fever ..	...	2	...	..	1	...	3
Small Pox ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles ...	...	1	...	...	...	1	2
Scarlet Fever ...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2
Diphtheria and Croup ..	...	...	1	3	1	...	5
Diarrhoea and Enteritis ...	1	5	4	..	3	3	16
(Under Two Years)	1	8	5	5	5	4	28

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE DURING THE YEAR.

	Totals	Netherton	Bedlington	Choppington	Sleekburn	W. S'b'n	Cambois
Scarlet Fever ...	81	...	6	17	18	55	5
Diphtheria ...	45	4	6	4	12	19	...
Enteric Fever ...	9	...	4	4	1	..	..
Erysipelas ...	26	1	11	1	10	3	...
Puerperal Fever ...	1	...	...	..	1	...	..
Encephalitis							
Lethargica ...	7	...	3	3	...	1	...
Malaria ..	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Ophthalmia							
Heonatonum ...	2	...	1	1	..	...	...
Infective Enteritis ..	40	4	17	7	12	...	..
(Under 2)	212	9	48	37	55	58	5

PNEUMONIA—CASES NOTIFIED.

	Totals	0—1	1—2	2—5	5—15	15—25	25—45	45—65
Males ...	65	13	8	8	13	5	11	7
Females ...	35	4	5	8	8	...	6	4
	100	17	13	16	21	5	17	11

TUBERCULOSIS—PULMONARY.

		0—1	1—2	2—5	5—15	15—25	25—45	45—65
Males ...	11	...	...	...	2	2	5	2
Females ...	11	...	..	...	2	3	4	2
	22	...	..	...	4	5	9	4

OTHER FORMS.

		0—1	1—2	2—5	5—15	15—25	25—45	45—65
Males ...	14	...	3	3	2	2	3	1
Females ...	19	1	2	1	7	4	3	1
	33	1	5	4	9	6	6	2

CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS NOTIFIED AT THE DIFFERENT AGES
IN THE VARIOUS SUB-DISTRICTS DURING 1921.

	Pulmonary.	Other Forms.	Totals.	0-1	1-2	2-5	5-15	15-25	26-45	45-65
Bedlington	6	6	..	...	..	...	1	...	1 3	2 2 3 ...
Netherton	2	3	..	...	...	1	...	...	1 1	.. 1 1
Choppington	2	8	..	...	...	2	1 3	...	1 1	..
Sleekburn	11	9	..	1	...	1	...	3 3	3 1	5 3 ...
West Sleekburn	1	7	...	...	1	...	1	...	3	...
Cambois	..	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
	22	33	...	1	...	5	...	4 9	5 6	9 6 4 2

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE DISTRICT.

Epidemic Influenza occurred in the months of January, February and March and also in December.

The clinical features of the disease were the same as in previous years, and the epidemic, although probably more fully distributed, was of a milder type, with occasional Pneumonia which appeared less virulent than in former years.

Pneumonia.—The two types of Pneumonia were almost evenly divided in their incidences and although Broncho Pneumonia frequently complicated Influenza, it is highly probable that many of the cases of Lobar Pneumonia were similar to those met with in the winter months previous to the notification of Pneumonia, when no record was available as to the prevalence of this disease.

Scarlet Fever.—Throughout the whole year the district has never been actually free from this Infection although to a large extent limited to the areas of Stakeford and West Sleekburn, and thus probably transmitted during school attendance. This was demonstrated by the decrease in the number of cases during School Holidays. There has never been any real indication for School closure, as the number of cases notified during a limited period has never justified such action.

Diphtheria.—The majority of cases notified in the earlier part of the year in the Stakeford area suggested the probability of carriers.

Swabs of the children attending this School proved the presence of such carriers. Their isolation and treatment led to an immediate defervescence of this disease.

Measles.—With this disease not now being compulsorily notifiable it is impossible to give any statement regarding the incidence.

There is every reason to consider that during the year few cases have occurred.

Erysipelas.—This disease has been more prevalent than in former years and may from a bacteriological standpoint bear some relationship to Influenza and Scarlet Fever which has been so frequently prevalent during the year.

Encephalitis Lethargica or Sleeping Sickness.—This obscure disease the Epidemiology and Bacteriology of which is still undetermined appeared in the early part of the year.

7 cases were notified, although 6 actually occurred. Of the 6 cases 3 occurred at Choppington and 3 at Bedlington. Two of the six were notified after having received treatment at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Their time of admittance to the Institution was simultaneous with the notification of three cases in the district.

It must be then assumed that the infective agent was present about the latter part of December, 1920 and beginning of January, 1921. The cases showed no association with one another from the point of view of contact or any illness antecedent to the attack of Encephalitis.

The sixth case occurred in Bedlington in May, ran an acute and rapid course, with early coma and death. In no case could the source of infection be detected. Of the 5 cases which recovered, two now present the unfortunate sequelæ in the way of Tremors, Paralysis and Mental Change due to the destruction of certain centres in the Brain, whilst the other three cases although not entirely normal in their mental state are able to follow out the ordinary duties of daily life.

Enteric Fever.—The prevalence of a number of Chronic Carriers as the result of frequent epidemics in the district accounted for 7 of the 9 cases notified during the year. Two cases were reported from Choppington, one in April and another in May from the same house, the latter being secondary and infected whilst the first case was being nursed at home prior to removal to Hospital.

The source of infection in these cases was the eating of Shell-fish from the bed of the River Blyth below the outlet of the Bedlington and Blyth Fever Hospitals. A full report of these cases was forwarded to the Ministry of Health.

Of the 7 remaining cases, 2 occurred in Guide Post and 5 in Bedlington and in both instances were restricted to certain areas in these privy midden districts. The mode of infection was by food through the agency of flies carrying the germs from the excreta of Chronic Carriers. That the disease was local and occurred in the manner explained as shown by the 5 cases in Bedlington which arose in a very limited area, the first case not having been notified until in a state of relapse and with a P.M. System of excrement disposal was, for a period of 1 month previous to removal to Hospital, a dangerous means of infection to the surrounding inhabitants. Fortunately only 3 cases were secondary to this primary case.

Infective Enteritis.—40 cases under 2 years were notified during the months of July, August and September. From some sub-districts there were no notifications which was evidently due to the negligence of the Medical Practitioners. It is highly necessary that these cases should all be notified at the earliest possible time in order that the advice given by the Health Visitors regarding diet may be put into operation in the first stage of the disease. Suitable conditions of temperature and moisture may as in past summers be productive of an extensive and virulent epidemic the deaths from which can only be controlled by early notification and home visiting.

Without going into any detail regarding the preventative measures necessary during the seasonal incidence of the disease such as flies as the carriers, cleaning of utensils, the covering of food stuffs, particularly milk, it might be said that fewer cases have occurred during recent years, probably due to education and the introduction of germ-free Dried Milk which is quickly prepared in small quantities and not stored in bulk like Fresh Cow Milk. Seeing that the mode of infection by flies is similar to that of Enteric Fever, it is highly necessary that mothers should educate their children to cleaner habits and avoid this promiscuous defecation which is so common. Filthy as it may be at any time, how much more dangerous it must be in the summer months when children are suffering from the disease, but not in such a degree as to confine them to the house.

Tuberculosis.—This is the disease which unfortunately year by year produces an increasing scourge upon the nation, and, with the huge national expenditure to combat with it, we cannot say any success has been achieved either from a Preventative or Curative Standpoint.

It might be said that with the introduction of Dried Milk, Intestinal Tuberculosis in children is less common, but their freedom from infection can only be for a limited period when Fresh Milk is so commonly infected by Tubercular Cows. This may be the channel of infection in a small proportion of cases, but it can easily be understood that the most common and rational means is by direct inhalation from the consumptive and this more particularly during sleeping hours, when windows are closed and the air vitiated.

The practice of closing windows during sleeping hours is very common in the district and at the present time when overcrowding is so acute the danger of infection is much greater.

This emphasizes the need of more houses, and as a temporary expedient, the Council may wisely consider the question of permitting sub-letting in in their Housing Scheme. Each application could be considered by the Housing Committee and temporary ~~premises~~ granted. There are many tenants occupying the houses with small families in which sub-letting regulated by the Council would not permit of overcrowding.

If such was adopted not only would it assist in alleviating this undesirable condition, but would ease the burden of High Rents and Rates on the tenants. Referring to the Isolation of advanced Cases which is the most potent means of disseminating the disease, it is to be hoped that the Local Authority might favourably consider securing these powers and utilize the Present Infectious Disease Hospital for that purpose, seeing that its construction makes it only suitable for the treatment of one infection in one building. Regarding the notification of the disease, it is very disappointing that these cases are not notified earlier by the Medical Practitioners.

It must be admitted that certain cases are very acute and run a short course, but this cannot be said of the majority. Early notification would assist in not only drawing the householder's attention to the preventative measures recommended, but assist in early sanatorium treatment. Of the 55 cases notified in 1921, 5 died on the day notified, 7 within 3 weeks, 3 within 6 months and 2 within 12 months. In some cases Medical Practitioners may for a while remain in doubt, but in these cases it is advisable to have the opinion of the Tuberculosis Officer and not wait until the signs and symptoms have become evident beyond any doubt. The Tuberculosis Officer is only too ready to appreciate such action and keeps the patients under observation, or may even recommend Sanatorium Treatment as a suspicious case. It must be admitted that early diagnosis of the disease is sometimes difficult, but surely we should not deter in seeking an opinion gratuitously, which is in the interest of the patient and the opinion of one whose whole study is that of Tuberculosis. During the year 14 cases were admitted to Sanatorium and 13 discharged.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—Two cases were notified, but remained at home with complete recovery.

Puerperal Fever.—One case was notified in December, remained at home and died.

SCHOOL CLOSURE.

With the epidemic of Influenza necessitating School Closure, the question of advisability or otherwise of such action has now become very controversial.

Generally speaking, if any disease has shown signs of quickly spreading through the agency of School attendance, the closure has been recommended.

Regarding Scarlet Fever which has been present throughout almost the entire year, but never to any degree to be considered epidemic, it is very doubtful if School Closure would have entirely checked the spread.

In considering the Recent Influenza Epidemic, the disease attacked young and old alike, but to a lesser degree children attending School.

This was probably due to the more Hygienic conditions in Schools with more air space per head than in their homes.

Furthermore, in the less crowded Schools, the attendance was maintained at a higher level than in those overcrowded. The Schools were closed in some areas for 2 weeks; in others for one week only. Regarding Measles which is highly infective and an infection by contact and occurring almost entirely amongst children attending the Infant Department and not attacking persons of all ages like Influenza, it is probably advisable to recommend School Closure of the Infant Department only, and this only on the first indication that an epidemic is likely to occur.

In summarising the remarks it might be concluded that, with the exception of Measles, there is no justification in School Closure from a point of Preventative measures, unless under exceptional circumstances.

Whooping Cough was prevalent during the early part of the year, and was of a mild type.

HOSPITALS.

Stakeford.—Isolation Hospital.

Staith Quay.—Infectious Disease Hospital.

At the latter 9 cases of Enteric Fever were admitted, with 3 deaths.

The construction of this Hospital is unsuitable for the separate treatment of Enteric Fever, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, etc.

The Council should consider, at the earliest convenience, the advisability and erection of a New Hospital on the Block System and then removing all Infectious Cases to Hospital from their homes.

HOUSING.

Of all matters concerning the Local Authority, it can certainly be said that during the last 2 years, the Question of Housing has been foremost in the minds of the members of the Council. The amount of time which has been devoted to the work of the Housing Scheme can only be fully recognised by the members of that Committee and in this direction the services of the Chairman, Mr. Baker, have been indispensable. There undoubtedly has been much criticism regarding the selection of tenants, but the pledge of "Homes for Heroes" has not been more fully recognised by any L.A.

In addition, all things being equal, priority has been given to soldiers with the larger families.

It might be considered that overcrowding cannot be so readily alleviated by such condition and the most desirable tenants are not always selected, yet it must be acknowledged that the men who fought and helped to win the war should have prior claim in any application. Regarding the desirability of tenants it might be said that many have come from the slums of the town, but let it be remembered that it is the slums we wish to demolish, and although many may not have had an opportunity of living outside such an undesirable environment, now that their surroundings have altered, it is only to be hoped that they will appreciate the change and attempt to live in harmony with their new conditions.

With the continued increase in overcrowding there is little doubt that nothing less than 1,000 houses will be required to meet the demands of the district so as to deal satisfactorily with both shortage and demolition.

Schemes have already been approved by the Ministry for the erection of 572 houses in the Shire, but owing to excessive cost of labour, sanction has now only been granted for the erection of 116 at Hollymount, Bedlington, and 62 at Sleekburn, a total of 178, and these are almost completed. The Ministry has probably acted wisely in this direction, seeing that already there has been a marked fall in the cost, and this will probably continue, and when the price is approved of by the Ministry, schemes in other sub-districts will be commenced. It is rather unfortunate that the Choppington and Guide Post Scheme has not been put into operation, seeing that these areas suffer most heavily from overcrowding. The L.A. have recently had under consideration new plans and estimates whereby either by the abolition of the Bath Room or one Bedroom, a figure such as might be approved of by the Ministry will be arrived at so as to erect 50 houses at Guide Post to meet the urgent demands in that sub-district.

It must be admitted that removal of the Bath Room, however necessary it may be, is not from a health standpoint so vital as suitable and ample sleeping accommodation. This is recognised by the Council only as a temporary measure until such times as houses of the original types may be built at a more reduced cost. The Question of Rents has already received every consideration by the Council and in conjunction with other neighbouring Authorities, an attempt is now being made, owing to altered conditions in mining areas, to secure the sanction of the Ministry for a reduction.

From the point of view of overcrowding and which will also assist the tenants in meeting the demands of rent and rates, the L.A. have at present under consideration the advisability of sanctioning sub-letting in suitable cases.

That the demand exceeds the supply can be recognised when approximately there are 3 applications to each appointment.

This is the Report of the Housing Schemes in Bedlingtonshire at the time of writing, namely, 15th April, 1922.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Little more can be added to the reports of previous years, the staff centres and methods of administration being the same as that of 1920.

Glaxo and Virol have as usual been distributed at the centres each month and weekly at the Health Department. During the Coal Strike the amount supplied voluntarily increased enormously and supply was granted only after investigation of each case. This was supplimented by a supply of Fresh Milk and Condensed Milk to Infants in cases where Dried Milk was unsuitable.

Since the resumption of the coal industry the demand for a gratuitous supply has decreased to such a degree as to necessitate the giving of approximately 8 packets per week.

Application for such a supply is only granted after completion of a Form supplied by the Health Department and with the consent of the Welfare Committee who have adopted a scale of income in necessitous instances. Glaxo, in these cases, is granted not only for Infant Feeding, but to Nursing Mothers. During the latter months of the year there has been a slight falling off in the attendance at the Centres, only accountable by the weighing of infants in a naked state.

This has met with disapproval from many mothers, but it is a regulation which must be fulfilled in order to obtain the Grant from the Ministry. It is quite conceivable that in infants where the gain per month is only a matter of ounces, the system is useless unless accurate weights are recorded on the Chart. It can also be readily understood that all mothers are not able to dress their infants in the most desirable manner and thus feel their position very keenly when such measure is adopted. Undoubtedly, in a short time, this will gradually be overcome and the undressing of infants will be a matter of course. The Health Visitors continue to carry out a system of Home Visiting and thus keep in touch with infants who do not attend the Centres. Whether it be at the Centres, or at their homes, the Nurses primary object is to recommend and assist the mothers in Natural Feeding and it is only when this fails that Dried Milk, Condensed Milk or Fresh Cow's Milk is resorted to.

The utility of the Maternity and Child Welfare work can only be appreciated by the gradual fall in Infantile Mortality since the initiation of the Scheme.

The Committees at the various Centres have rendered invaluable assistance, and in order to meet the uncertainty of their regular attendance, it is highly desirable that the number at each Centre should be augmented.

The Medical Officer visits the Centres as often as convenient and at each attendance records the condition of the Infants on a proper Chart Sheet.

HEALTH VISITORS' REPORT.

To the Chairman and Members of the Bedlingtonshire
Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

The following Report submitted to you is merely the outline of the work done for Maternity and Child Welfare in your district during the year, 1921. Births registered, 777. Births notified to Medical Officer of Health, 784. These figures include 35 Illegitimate Births—22 Males, 14 Females, Stillbirths, 30. Deaths registered, 74 and this gives an Infantile Mortality Rate of 95 per 1,000. 25 left the districts of Bedlingtonshire. First visits to Maternity cases numbered 778; subsequent visits, 3289. Infectious Diseases notified:—Diphtheria, 45; Epidemic Diarrhoea (notifiable during July, August and September), 40; Scarlet Fever, 81; Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 2; Puerperal Fever, 1. The Infectious Diseases, here recorded, were visited. When notification of Diphtheria was received the home was visited, and swabs taken from each child in the family. The patient, before returning to School found by final swabbing, to be free from germs. 187 swabs were taken, 80 of these from the children attending Stakeford Council Schools, in May.

Visits to cases of Epidemic Diarrhoea are unquestionably most necessary, urging as they do, the extreme importance of carrying out the Doctor's orders, especially as to diet, or fasting. Many mothers do not realise the great danger of this disease, nor the fact that they themselves may frequently lessen the severity and shorten the period of suffering, by following out simple hygienic rules in the home; in the congested areas especially, we find the Epidemic blamed only to the flies, without much effort made to combat them. Of the two cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, one had treatment given, owing to the District Nurse not visiting.

Attendances at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, numbered 2,295.

A meeting of the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee was held on May 3rd, when the Committee passed a resolution that the Health Visitors should attend at the appointed places in their districts to supply the artificially fed Infants, nursing and expectant Mothers with Fresh and Dried Milk in needful cases, through the period of the Strike; with the usual weekly Centre held, this left only two afternoons free for visiting, which explains the reason that the numbers of visits are lower than those of 1920.

We are Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

A. PEART,

V. A. N. DAVIES.

Causes of, and Ages at Death during the Year 1921.

CAUSE OF DEATH.		NETT DEATHS AT THE SUBJOINED AGES OF "RESIDENTS" WHETHER OCCURRING WITH IN OR WITHOUT THE DISTRICT.								
		Total.	Under 1 year.	1 & under 2 years.	2 & under 5 years.	5 & under 15 years.	15 & under 25 years.	25 & under 45 years.	45 & under 65 years.	65 years. and up.
All Causes	{ Certified	... 340	73	25	13	20	15	36	73	85
	{ Uncertified	... 4	1						1	2
1 Enteric Fever		... 3				1		2		
2 Small Pox		... 2		1		1				
3 Measles		... 2			1		1			
4 Searlet Fever		... 4	2	1	1					
5 Whooping Cough		... 5		2	1	2				
6 Diphtheria and Croup		... 7						2	4	1
7 Influenza		... 3							2	1
8 Erysipelas		... 32		1	2	5	7	8	8	1
9 Phthsis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)		... 5	1	1	1	1		1		
10 Tuberculous Meningitis		... 14	2	4	3	1	2	1	1	
11 Other Tuberculous Diseases		... 32							18	14
12 Cancer, malignant disease		... 8	3	3	1	1				
13 Rheumatic Fever		... 31				3	1	1	11	15
14 Meningitis		... 9	3	2						4
15 Organic Heart Disease		... 38	11	6		2	1	5	5	8
16 Bronchitis		... 2						1	1	
17 Pneumonia—all forms		... 16	14	2						
18 Other diseases of Respiratory Organs		... 1				1				
19 Diarrhœa and Enteritis		... 1							1	
20 Appendicitis and Typhlitis		... 1								
21 Cirrhosis of Liver		... 14		1		1		2	6	4
21aAlcoholism		... 1					1			
22 Nephritis and Bright's Disease		... 1								
23 Puerperal Fever		... 3	1					2		
24 Other accidents and diseases of Preg- nancy and Parturition		... 26	25					1		
25 Congenital Debility and Malformation including Premature Birth		... 7			1			3	2	1
26 Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide		... 74	11	1	2	1	2	7	14	36
27 Suicide		...								
28 Other Defined Diseases		...								
29 Diseases ill-defined or unknown		...								
TOTALS		... 340	73	25	13	20	15	36	73	85

**The Causes of Death at the Various Periods
of Life, under 1 Year.**

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	2-3 Weeks.	3-4 Weeks.	Total under 1 Month.	1-3 Months.	3-6 Months.	6-9 Months.	9-12 Months.	Total Deaths under One Year.
Measles										
Whooping Cough						1	1			2
Influenza										
Pneumonia		1		1	2	1	2	2	4	11
Bronchitis								1	2	3
Tuberculosis								4		4
Convulsions	3	2	1		6	2				8
Asphyxia	1				1					1
Syphilis										
Infective Enteritis						1	6	1	3	11
Congenital Malformation	1				1			1		2
Meningitis							2			2
Gastritis				1	1			1		2
Marasmus				1	1	1			1	3
Debility from Birth	3	1			4	2	1		1	8
Prematurity	11	1	1	1	14					14
Disease of Parturition										
Other Causes						1	1			2
Uncertified						1				1
Totals	19	5	2	4	30	10	13	10	11	74

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year—

(a) Total.

(b) As part of a municipal housing scheme.

1. *Unfit dwelling-houses.*

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	172
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	172
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	—
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	172

2. *Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	158
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3. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit—	
(a) by owners	—
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	—

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	82	{ The notice for the remaining 90 houses were served in 1920.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied—		
(a) by owners	168	
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	—	

C.—Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	—
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	—
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	—

DRAINAGE.

District.	Foul.	Defective.	Untrapped.	No. Remedied.
Bedlington ...	25	4	—	29
Sleekburn ...	17	4	—	21
Guide Post... ..	10	7	—	17
Choppington ...	7	3	—	10
Stakeford ...	9	2	1	12
West Sleekburn...	4	2	2	8
Cambois ...	7	—	—	7
Netherton ...	7	—	—	7
Totals ...	86	22	3	111

SANITARY CONVENIENCES, OTHER THAN W.C's.

District.	Foul.	Defective.	No. Remedied.
Bedlington	36	25	61
Sleekburn	13	44	57
Guide Post	25	14	39
Choppington	20	32	52
Stakeford	15	17	30
West Sleekburn	6	45	51
Cambois	7	36	43
Netherton	24	23	47
Totals ..	144	236	380

SANITARY CONVENIENCES—W.C's.

District.	Foul.	Defective.	No. Remedied.
Bedlington	36	21	57
Sleekburn	15	—	15
Guide Post	8	4	12
Choppington	11	7	18
Stakeford	10	3	13
West Sleekburn...	—	—	—
Cambois	—	—	—
Netherton	—	—	—
Totals ...	80	35	115

DWELLINGS.

District.	No. Defective.	No. Remedied.	
Bedlington ...	40	40	... Catholic Row, Baptist Yard, Glebe Row, Salmon Hall, Coach Road and Bell's Place.
Sleekburn ...	11	11	... Ravensworth Terrace and Red Row. 4 Back to Back Houses converted Through Draughts.
Guide Post ...	13	9	... Freehold Terrace, Sheepwash Bank, Mowbray Terrace and Front St.
Choppington ...	6	6	... Back Scotland Gate and Whinney Hill.
Stakeford ...	8	8	... Marshes Houses, Cottages and Half Moon Terrace.
West Sleekburn	4	4	... East Sleekburn Cottages.
Cambois ...	—	—	...
Netherton ...	90	90	... Yard Row, completed from 1920.
Totals ...	172	168	

The chief defects consisted of dilapidated roofs, spouting, walls and floors.

SCAVENGING OF HOUSE REFUSE.

The work is carried out chiefly by contract, and the deposit continues to be upon land for agricultural purposes, or within excavations of brick yards.

The collection takes place monthly, fortnightly and weekly, or at any time the Inspector considers necessary.

The conveying of refuse matter by suitable vehicles together with "direct labour" should have early consideration, so as to prevent the spilling and depositing of effite matter too near dwellings and within chief thoroughfares.

No conversions of ashpits to ashbins have taken place.

NUISANCES.

In many instances Common Nuisances have occurred, the chief offences being the keeping of animals, the storing of manure for unlimited periods, filthy yards and passages and the fouling of ashpits by vegetable matter and liquid.

The practice among occupiers of providing unsuitable places for the keeping of animals within the most congested areas still prevails.

Inspections have been made in several cases where damp ashpits have been complained of only to find temporary erections with the roofs falling directly into the receptacle.

DRAINAGE.

Several choked drains have been observed during the year and no doubt the paving of streets, yards and passages would have an effect.

WATER CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Number of conversions from Privies to W.C's.—93.

As the conservancy system exists within the greater part of the district comprising approximately 3,558 Privies, 1,123 W.C's., 1,944 Open Ashpits and 823 Covered Ashpits, the conversion of Privies to the Water Carriage System, especially those in the most congested areas is a matter to be considered as soon as possible.

Conversions.—North Blyth, 85 Privies to W.C's.

In these cases the contents of the privy ashpits had to be deposited upon the streets previous to collection, causing a considerable nuisance to inhabitants.

Front Street, Guide Post.—2 Privies converted to W.C's through dilapidations and being too near dwellings.

Stakeford Cottages.—1 W.C. substituting 2 Privies through dilapidations.

Front Street, Bedlington.—2 W.C's in place of Privies, as no proper cart road was provided.

School House, Cambois.—1 W.C. in place of Privy.

Bedlington Station.—2 W.C's in place of Privies.

In 3 cases covered Ashpits have been provided and water laid upon the premises.

In every case the necessary drainage has been completed and connected to sewers.

PRIVIES AND ASHPITS.

In most cases the defects of Privies and Ashpits consisted of dilapidated roofs and walls. In 36 instances, at Cambois, damp Privies and Ashpits caused by surface washing have been remedied through the provision of non-absorbent floors and risers being brought above the road level.

At Red Row 6 Privies with roofs falling towards ashpits have been reconstructed. In a few cases the floors of sanitary conveniences were found below the street level through paving which should be guarded against.

COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

49 exist on Register, which is three more than last year.

The cows are habitually grazed. Over 400 cows have been counted.

60 visits have been made and in 13 cases limewashing and cleansing has been called for.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

16 are on the Register and 1 licensed. 36 Slaughter House visits have been made, and in 4 instances cleansing has been called for.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

4 are on the Register. Regular visits have been made, and in 6 cases cleansing and limewashing has been called for.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

These chiefly consist of Fish and Chip Shops. 11 exist within the district, and frequent attention has been paid to the cleanliness of the premises.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION.

205 houses have had final disinfection. 9 sets of bed and clothing have been disinfected by steam.

Schools have been disinfected in 46 cases.

The district has been systematically disinfected, and Privy-Middens, Drains and Sewers have had special attention.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, WORK-PLACES, & HOME WORK.

		Inspections.	Notices.
Registered Workshops	...	65	1
„ Factories	...	19	2
„ Workplaces	...	12	0
Totals	...	96	3

DEFECTS FOUND.

Three, consisting of limewashing, insufficient sanitary accommodation and damp wall and floors. One Bakery has been done away with through having insufficient sanitary conveniences together with damp floors and walls, in lieu of which a new Bakery has been erected at Bedlington Station, sufficiently provided with two W.C's and drains displacing privy midden.

OTHER MATTERS.

Factories consist chiefly of Cycle and Motor Works, Boot and Shoe Makers, Brick Works, Aerated Waterworks, Sawmills and Cartwrights, and Candle Works.

16 are on the Register.

Bakeries—(no underground)	...	...	5
Workshops—Consisting chiefly of Dressmakers, Milliners, Joiners, Saddlers, Printers, Hosiery and Watchmakers	...	...	72
Workplaces—Stone Dressers	...	...	3
Total	...	...	80

In 3 cases matters notified by the Inspector of Factories have been attended to.

Formal Notices served	...	...	5
Informal . „ „	...	...	610
Visits	...	...	2031

R. M. LAVERICK,

Sanitary Inspector.

EXTRACTS FROM SURVEYOR'S REPORT BOOK.

Public Lighting—Additional gas lamps fixed, 37 ; additional electric lamps fixed, 2. Six automatic time switches fixed at Cambois.

Water Supply—Apart from usual repairs to mains, pants, etc., and additional pants, C I. pipes have been laid for Hollymount and Sleekburn Housing Schemes and 158 yards of C.I. pipes laid to converted huts at Cambois.

Roads—Portions of the following have been relaid—

Main Roads—Stakeford, Sleekburn and H. and C.

Second Class Roads—Bomarsund and Netherton.

Dangerous Turns improved—Half-Moon Corner, Stakeford, and Willow Bank, Choppington.

Footpaths have been relaid with tarmacadam and ashes.

Fires attended—Bedlington Colliery, Stackyard.

Sewers—Usual cleansing.

Allotments—Ridge Terrace, 28 plots ; Rothesay Terrace, 58 plots.

SCAVENGING.

Owing to the preponderance of the P.M. System great difficulty arises in carrying out the work.

After a general consideration of the present method the following recommendations might be suggested :—

(1) Although the extra in purchase of Horses, Carts, Building of Stables, etc., would entail a large expenditure, yet this is apparently the only method which will ensure regular and efficient cleansing. The system of letting by contract requires continual supervision, and is usually carried out by contractors who have other work and thus do not carry out the scavenging systematically. In addition their carts are small and unsuitable for the purpose.

(2) Recent experience of the work done by motor power has shown that this is the most expeditious means in suitable areas, and for this reason the Council might use their motor waggon for such purposes.

(3) It is again necessary to draw attention to the advisability of covering carts, particularly during hot weather, which is not only hygienic, but would probably prevent to a certain degree this overloading and dropping of refuse on public thoroughfares

(4) The wheeling-out process should be conducted at a suitable hour of the morning and not at mid-day—a condition which latterly has appeared too frequently.

(5) Relative to question 4 the conversion to the Water Carriage System and adoption of Bins in these congested areas is the only sanitary measure which will satisfactorily meet the requirements.

(6) In certain areas in the shire the P.M. System is such that no separate inlet is provided for Privy and Midden, with the result that the occupiers are compelled to place the ashes outside the convenience.

Not only is this a nuisance, but the deodorizing and absorptive powers of the ashes are not utilized.

In summarising it might be said that with the demolition of the undesirable dwellings already inspected and reported upon, the erection of New Houses by the L.A., and the gradual conversion from the Conservancy System to the Water Carriage System through the adoption of the Public Health Act Amend. Act, the time is fast approaching when the present system of scavenging will become obsolete and the work will be carried out more efficiently by means of motor power.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The immediate consideration of the various insanitary dwellings, particularly these in which reconstruction is necessary, in order to bring them to the required standard.

Notices should now be served upon the owners of such property in order that they may have an opportunity of commencing the work with as little delay as possible.

Revelant to this, and specially regarding congested areas in which the Privy Midden System is prevalent, the question of the adoption of the P. H. Act, Am. Act, 1907, might be favourably considered, whereby a portion of the cost of conversion could be defrayed by the Local Authority.

It is unfortunate that in a few cases in which property has recently been repaired, opportunity for these conversions was not afforded by the adoption of the Act, with the result that Privy Middens continue to exist. Owing to inadequate sewers and insufficient water supply it is at present only possible to consider the most urgent cases, but there is little doubt that this Sanitary measure would greatly improve the health of the district, and although the initial cost may be considerable, yet this would in a short while be repaid by the decrease in cost of Scavenging and thus lead to great efficiency in this work, and avoid the difficulties arising from the present system of excrement disposal. The Privy Midden system is insanitary, obsolete and undesirable and should be abolished wherever opportunity is afforded.

It is thus hoped that the L.A. will press forward the adoption of this Act which is most urgently needed, and has been regularly advocated by me in the Annual Reports.

- (2) The adoption of the above Act and particularly the following sections :—25, 26, 27, 35, 39, 44, 49, 52, 53, 54 and 61, and also Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890.
- (3) The completion of the new Sewer from Netherton to Tidal waters.
- (4) The building of a new Infectious Hospital or extension of the present building in such a manner as to permit of isolation of cases other than Enteric Fever.

I take the opportunity of thanking the members of the Council for their courtesy and assistance in carrying out the duties of my office.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

W. HUDSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

